

5 STEPS TO KEEPING YOUR FAMILY SANE DURING COVID19

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ROOTS & WINGS

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING
FOR THE PREVENTION OF TRAUMA

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01

GOALS & GRATITUDE:

Immediately upon waking, write down two things:

1. your goal for the day and
2. what you are grateful for.

Kids that can't write can draw a picture. Gratitude protects from depression and writing (and working toward) daily goals creates purpose. In a world that feels upsidedown, feeling purposeful is essential.

02

STRUCTURE

Emotional dysregulation thrives with lack of structure. Create a daily schedule and stick to it Monday through Friday.

Beware of binge-watching tv or marathon video games, while a day or two of this is fine, this kind of behavior can diminish a feeling of purpose and ability to contribute. If you are craving a lazy binging tv day, save it for Saturday or Sunday.

Stick to regular bedtimes and wake times. Lack of adequate sleep increases activity in the amygdala—the emotional response center of the brain which makes us less capable of dealing with our emotions.

At dinner, daily family meetings, or check-ins serve as an emotional regulatory tool. Start every family meeting with each family member saying what they appreciate about each other and then move to each person checking in about how they are doing.

03

CREATE

Create something beautiful: beauty is healing and creation generates purpose. They say that necessity is the mother of invention--boredom is the father. Allowing boredom will lead to creativity. Creating something is an easy way to find daily purpose, which has been shown to protect us from anxiety and depression. Brainstorm with your kids: what inspires them? Have they ever wanted to make a video game? Write a book? Bake a cake? Paint? Write a song? Build a website? Start a company or non-profit? If it's something that can be shared with others, even better as purpose is amplified when it's paired with altruism. Share with them what you are creating, too. If you're not working on something, brainstorm with them what you are thinking during the family meeting.

04

PLAY

Play with your kids--I don't care if they are 18 or 3, kids and teens need play and laughter for neurological regulation. Playing is also an excellent way to deepen your relationship. Board games are great, but physical games are better for these COVID19 times. What are your children's favorite games? Hide and seek, basketball, treasure hunts, dance parties, tossing a ball...brainstorm ideas with your kids. The neurological benefits are amplified when you play in nature. Get outside at least twice a day as nature heals, relaxes and provides neurological regulation.

05

CONNECT

Last but not least, have your child/teen pick 3-5 of their closest friends or family that they can be truly authentic with. Make a point to have them connect with one of these friends of family each day. Facetime/Skype/Google hangouts or Zoom are significantly better psychologically than a phone call or text. An essential aspect of connecting is to think of others and build compassion. To do so, have your child/teen reach out to someone who may be lonely at least every other day, even if they are not close. Then, talk with them about how that person must be feeling.